



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR FISHING CONTESTS

Authority: 87-3-121, MCA; 12.7.801 – 12.7.809, ARM; 23-1-106 MCA; Parks Biennial Fee Rule

Thank you for your interest in conducting a fishing contest in Montana. This reference guide provides information on the rules pertaining to fishing contests and the permitting process. Please review this information and submit a completed Fishing Contest Permit Application by the applicable deadline.

PART I. PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

A fishing contest is any event, contest, derby, or tournament where an entry fee is charged or where people may win prizes or cash for catching fish in Montana. FWP requires a permit to conduct a fishing contest in Montana. [Exception: Fishing contests involving fewer than 30 people with cash prizes or merchandise worth \$500 or less do not require a permit but must comply with all fishing contest regulations.] The Fisheries Bureau and the Parks Division both have permitting requirements for fishing contest. In the interest of simplification for the applicants, the department combined the permitting processes. The terms and conditions of the permit will vary depending on the location of the contest, the number of participants, and whether FWP administered fishing access sites or state parks are involved. Please Note: No contests will be permitted for holiday weekends, and no contests are allowed involving any Montana listed species of special concern or for wild trout in rivers or streams.

PART II. PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

For all contests requiring a permit, the contest organizer must submit a Fishing Contest Permit Application to: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Attn: Fishing Contest Permit Application, 1420 East 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-0701. Upon receiving a completed application the fisheries and parks staff will evaluate the proposed event and identify terms and conditions for the permit. FWP will give public notice of all contests and provide an opportunity for public comment.

PART III. PARKS SPECIAL USE FEES

In accordance with the Parks Biennial Fee Rule, the contest organizer must pay a permit fee of \$3 per participant if the contest includes 30 or more people and utilize a FWP administered fishing access site or state park. The fee is used to off-set the cost of the Parks Division administering the event, including but not limited to site clean-up, latrine pumping, road plowing and maintenance/monitoring. FWP may adjust this fee on a case-by-case basis. Examples that may warrant a fee reduction include contests organized primarily for children under the age of thirteen and contests when proceeds are donated to a nonprofit organization, a charitable cause, or the maintenance, management, or improvement of a facility or site. Fee reduction requests will be handled by the FWP Regional Parks Manager in the administrative region where the contest will occur. The contest organizer is responsible for submitting all owed fees within 30 days after the conclusion of the contest. Organizers will receive a Payment Form with their permit. Failure to comply may result in a \$50 late payment penalty, citation, and loss of future privileges.

IMPORTANT DATES

Applications must be submitted between May 1 & July 1 for **winter ice-fishing** contests (12/1 – 3/1).

Applications must be submitted between September 1 & November 1 for **open-water** contests (3/1 – 12/1).

Late Applications WILL NOT be accepted except on a case-by-case basis for benefit fundraising contests.